NOTE DE RECHERCHE / RESEACH NOTE

Miss Canadian University, 1970: Campus Pageants as Places of Protest

MEGAN BLAIR*

Using the controversial 1970 Miss Canadian University pageant as a case study, this Research Note contextualizes young women's participation in and rejection of pageants within the burgeoning women's liberation movement on Canadian university campuses in the 1960s and 1970s. Through an analysis of archival records, it examines how the issues raised and actions taken in the 1970 pageant and protest percolated across university campuses, raising awareness of the women's liberation movement among university students while enhancing student activism. It also focuses specifically on the impact that the protests had on the counterculture campus of Simon Fraser University and the more conservative student body at Waterloo Lutheran University.

Le controversé concours Miss Canadian University de 1970 sert d'étude de cas dans la présente note de recherche pour étudier la participation de jeunes femmes à des concours de beauté et leur rejet de tels concours dans le contexte du mouvement de libération de la femme, en plein essor sur les campus universitaires du Canada dans les années 1960 et 1970. Les documents d'archives montrent que les questions soulevées et les mesures prises au concours de 1970 se sont répercutées sur les campus, ont sensibilisé les étudiants au mouvement de libération de la femme et renforcé le militantisme étudiant. La note se penche en particulier sur les effets des contestations à l'Université Simon Fraser, haut lieu de la contre-culture, et sur les étudiants plutôt conservateurs de la Waterloo Lutheran University.

ON THE EVENING of January 30, 1970, in a packed auditorium on the campus of Waterloo Lutheran University (WLU), 33 young women competed for the title of Miss Canadian University Snow Queen 1970. Although the annual pageant had been a starring aspect of the WLU Winter Carnival since 1963, the 1970 pageant garnered special attention not for the crowning of the Miss Canadian University

* Megan Blair completed her Master's degree in history at the University of Waterloo in fall 2019. The author would like to thank Tarah Brookfield for her immense support.

Queen but for the protest staged by members of the women's liberation movement. As the contestants lined the stage, Janiel Jolley, a protest candidate from Simon Fraser University (SFU), stood at the back of the auditorium and marched on stage as her supporters "raised fist[s] of liberation singing Solidarity Forever."[1] After speaking of the "dehumanizing nature of beauty contests," Jolley and her supporters marched out of the auditorium, united against "contests that glorify women as plastic sex objects."[2] In her history of how beauty contests in Canada traded in both symbols of ritualized femininity and beauty and consumable national identity, Patrizia Gentile has situated Jolley and the protest at the Miss Canadian University pageant of 1970 as a plot point in the story of feminist protest of beauty pageants' exploitation of women to the benefit of corporate sponsors between the Miss America Pageant in 1968 and the Miss Canada Pageant in 1976.[3] However, the protest also offers a case study in the uneven growth of the women's liberation movement in varying social atmospheres among youth on Canadian university campuses in a period of intense social turbulence and change. While Jolley's presence and performance at WLU in 1970 is part of the story of feminist protests of beauty pageants, it also has to be understood in the contexts of campus cultures and activism at Canadian universities in the 1960s and 1970s. Jolley arrived at WLU not just as a feminist protest candidate but as both a representative of the activist and feminist values held among students at SFU, a young university with a reputation for student activism, and a lighting rod for those same emerging values among students at WLU, in a fairly conservative campus culture ripe for feminist and activist awakening. As a case study, Jolley's protest illuminates the growth of Canadian campus activism in the 1960s and 1970s and the uneven terrain that the women's liberation movement had to navigate at Canadian postsecondary institutions.

"Flexible Cultural Terrains"

Throughout the twentieth century, community, national, and international beauty pageants promoted specific agendas of beauty and respectability, creating naturalized, universal, and consumable depictions of beauty "by collapsing racial, ethnic, and sexual diversity."[4] In North America both major pageants, such as the Miss America pageant, as well as smaller, more localized pageants, such as those hosted by unions, often reinforced ideals of white, middle-class womanhood.[5] According to Gentile, beauty, and women's bodies in general, were essential in

1 "Simon Fraser University Archives (hereafter SFUA), Collection F-73 - Women's Movement Collection (Marge Hollibaugh collector) (hereafter WMC), scrapbook 2, "Janiel Jolley Shows 'Em the Way," *The Peak*, February 4, 1970.

2 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, Janiel Jolley, "SFU Protestor 'Overcomes' University Beuaty Contest," *The Vancouver Sun,* January 31, 1970.

3 Patrizia Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf: A History of Beauty Contests in Twentieth Century Canada" (PhD dissertation, Queen's University, 2006), esp. chap. 6.

4 Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 3.

5 Joan Sangster, "'Queen' of the Picket Line: Beauty Contests in the Post-World War II Canadian Labour Movement, 1945-1979," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas,* vol. 5, no. 4 (2008), p. 99; Sarah Banet-Weiser, *The Most Beautiful Girl in the World: Beauty Pageants and National Identity* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 156.

"reifying abstract ideals like femininity, nation, community, and 'whiteness.'"[6] However, as Gentile has also argued, "beauty contests could be constructed as flexible cultural terrains" capable of conveying "multiple narratives … to both audiences and contestants."[7] In this regard, they also served as venues to debate the sexual objectification of women and challenge dominant discourses of class, race, and gender.[8] In Canada, for instance, Jane Nicholas has demonstrated how, even as early as the 1920s, papers such as the *Catholic Forum* denounced beauty pageants by condemning the indecency of revealing women's bodies and the impropriety of putting bodies on display.[9] By the mid-twentieth century, the social and moral conservatism of this critique was giving way to early feminist critiques, as women themselves questioned the meaning of beauty pageants, debating "the marketing of women's bodies" and finding empowerment in "anti-beauty culture protests that attempted to link race, class, and sexual oppression together."[10] The most notable example of feminist protest of beauty pageants, and some argue the first large-scale women's liberation movement event in the United States, occurred at the 1968 Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City, where women's liberation groups from across the United States gathered outside the pageant to accuse it of being "sexist, … racist, ageist, capitalist and pro-war."[11] This group of women used a variety of tactics, including throwing items such as bras, shoes, beauty products, and clothes into a "freedom trashcan," to express their disapproval of both the pageant and women's oppression more broadly.[12] Gentile argues that this, only two years before Jolley's protest on the WLU campus, was a transformative event for beauty pageants and initiated questions as to whether pageants could compete with shifting understandings of femininity brought about by feminist activists.[13]

By the 1960s, beauty pageants were a common activity on Canadian university campuses, with many schools and faculties hosting their own pageants. Campus pageants were viewed as an acceptable activity for female students because they promoted women as active members of the student body while also ensuring that their femininity was maintained and accentuated.[14] Similar to other pageants for youth, such as the Miss United Nations pageant held in Edmonton, campus pageants promoted the idea that women could be leaders and role models as well

6 Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 18.
7 Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 246.
8 Karen W. Tice, "Queens of Academe: Campus Pageantry and Student Life," *Feminist Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2005), p. 250; Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 3; Georgia Paige Welch, "'Up Against the Wall Miss America': Women's Liberation and Miss Black America in Atlantic City, 1968," *Feminist Formations*, vol. 27, no. 2 (2015), p. 75; Jane Nicholas, *The Modern Girl: Feminine Modernities, the Body, and Commodities in the 1920s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), p. 123.
9 Nicholas, *The Modern Girl*, pp. 143-147.
10 Sangster, "'Queen' of the Picket Line," p. 86.
11 Welch, "'Up Against the Wall Miss America,'" p. 78. Magda Hinojosa and Jill Carle, "From Miss World to Miss Leader: Beauty Queens, Paths to Power and Political Representations," *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2016), p. 26; Welch, "'Up Against the Wall Miss America,'" p. 79; Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 227.
12 Welch, "'Up Against the Wall Miss America,'" p. 79. Though the lasting memory of the protest is the "bra-burner," nothing was actually set aflame, according to Welch (p. 79).
13 Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 227.
14 Tice, "Queens of Academe," p. 260; Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 241.

as ornamental objects of beauty.[15] As such, campus pageants promoted female students without challenging the traditional gender expectations, instilled through both educational and extracurricular programming, that had prevailed for much of the postwar era. But like beauty contests, university campuses are also flexible cultural terrains, and campus pageants often provided female students with an opportunity to present a platform of issues to the campus community even as media reports focused on contestants' beauty rather than students' stances on political or social justice issues.[16] Gentile's examination of the Campus Crown Pageant at the University of Toronto, for instance, illustrates the multifaceted role pageants had on campus, even as early as the late 1940s. Student leaders and *The Varsity* promoted the pageant as an occasion to join in campus spirit and emphasized contestants' physical qualities and eligibility as wives; however, contestants also asserted their own desires to remain single and pursue careers, thus demonstrating the opportunity that pageants presented for women to assert their agency and independence.[17]

Jolley's 1970 protest occupies the flexible cultural terrain of both pageants and campuses. She was aware of and sought to capitalize on the reach of pageants in order to criticize them and the patriarchal work they perform. In a letter to Canadian women's liberation groups, Jolley wrote that her protest would be "the first time in North America that women's liberation has had the opportunity to expose the dehumanizing nature of beauty contests from the inside."[18] To underline this point, on a poster titled "Janiel Jolley Day," Vancouver Women's Caucus organizers outlined their reasons for sending a protest candidate: "Beauty contests are one of the few platforms open to women, through which we can reach other women, and the public at large. Hopefully, this action may help explain the ideas of women's liberation to thousands of women who have never heard them before."[19]

The Miss Canadian University Pageant

The most prominent nationwide student pageant in Canada during the mid-twentieth century was the Miss Canadian University Snow Queen Pageant, which was inaugurated in 1963 as part of WLU's annual Winter Carnival.[20] The Winter Carnival, which began in 1961, consisted of ice sculpting contests, parades, and musical performances by such renowned artists as Stevie Wonder

15 Tarah Brookfield, "Modeling the UN's Mission in Semi-Formal Wear: Edmonton's Miss United Nations Pageants of the 1960s," in Jane Nicholas and Patrizia Gentile, eds., *Contesting Bodies and Nation in Canadian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), p. 252.

16 This can be seen through WLU's student newspaper's reporting on the Miss Canadian University Pageant as well as in Gentile's examination of student newspaper coverage of the Campus Queen Pageant at the University of Toronto. Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 243.

17 Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 245.

18 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Letter to Canadian women's liberation groups," January 17, 1970.

19 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Janiel Jolley Day" poster, n.d, quoted in Gentile, p. 251.

20 Wilfrid Laurier University Archives & Special Collections (hereafter WLUASC), Winter Carnival Collection, RG-102.31, File 1.6, "WLU Winter Carnival '70," 1970.

and The Supremes.[21] Organized entirely by WLU students, the pageant grew throughout the decade as the number of competitors increased from 14 in 1963 to 35 in 1969, as female students from across the country continued to travel to WLU to represent their school in the event. By 1970, WLU prided itself on the national fame that the carnival and pageant had received in recent years.[22] The 1970 pageant consisted of 33 contestants competing for the crown and various prizes donated by local Waterloo businesses, including a four-day trip to Mexico, a Ford Maverick, an $800 fur coat, and numerous articles of clothing.[23] Upon their arrival at WLU, the contestants were met with a busy agenda of events leading up to the pageant, which included numerous luncheons, receptions, concerts, and such social activities as curling.[24] The contestants attended many of these events with their escorts, male students from WLU who, after filling out an application and completing an interview, had been chosen by the pageant committee to be paired with the contestants based on the compatibility of their height and other attributes.[25] The events, of course, culminated with the final pageant and crowning of the Miss Canadian University Queen based on the women's performances in the pageant and an interview with pageant judges.[26]

Although the 1970 pageant included many glamorous prizes and events and concluded with a "19 year old blonde from the University of Guelph" being crowned Miss Canadian University Snow Queen, the WLU student newspaper, *The Cord*, described one "unfortunate aspect" of the pageant as being the protests led by Janiel Jolley.[27] Jolley, a 25 year old who had recently moved to Canada from the United States because of her husband's political views, was originally the candidate registered to represent SFU, located in Burnaby, British Columbia.[28] Jolley, however, did not intend to participate as an actual pageant contestant but instead desired to attend the pageant in an act of protest to expose the "dehumanizing nature of beauty contests."[29] In the weeks before the pageant, Jolley reached out to both pageant organizers and fellow contestants to describe her proposed protests, explaining that:

> My intention is to in no way degrade my sisters. Rather, I will attempt to raise issues of sexual exploitation of women, point out that women participate in beauty contests because this society provides us with so few arenas in which we can appear, and to expose the nature of an educational system that perpetuates the objectification and dehumanization of women.[30]

21 To get a sense of the carnival's events, and the primacy of the pageant among them, see the 1967 program, http://images.ourontario.ca/Partners/WLU/0000744611T.PDF.
22 WLUASC, "WLU Winter Carnival '70," 1970.
23 WLUASC, "WLU Winter Carnival '70," 1970. Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 19, argues that the "beauty-industry complex," the relationship between beauty pageants and business sponsors, is key "to understanding how pageants were imbued with the gendered discourse of consumer culture."
24 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Entries for Escort Role Overflowing," n.d.
25 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Entries for Escort Role Overflowing," n.d.
26 "SFU Queen Queers Pageant," *McGill Daily,* February 2, 1970, p. 9.
27 Steve Young, "Miss Canadian University Chosen," *The Cord Weekly*, February 6, 1970, p. 1.
28 Young, "Miss Canadian University Chosen," p. 1.
29 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Letter to pageant contestants," January 17, 1970.
30 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Letter to pageant contestants," January 17, 1970.

Although pageant organizers initially accepted her as a protest candidate, stating that "any representative from any university, protest or otherwise, will be welcomed in the same manner as in past years," Jolley was subsequently disqualified from receiving funding for travel and accommodation to participate in the pageant.[31]

However, in the end, Jolley traveled to WLU with financial support from the SFU Women's Caucus, the SFU Student Society, as well as other campus and women's liberation groups.[32] This support is significant because, although her initial disqualification also hinted at her being unrepresentative of SFU students, it speaks to her presence at the Miss Canadian University Pageant at WLU in 1970 as indeed representative of SFU students.[33] Prior to travelling to WLU, Jolley attempted to rally the support of the SFU student body, women's liberation groups across the country, and women competing in the pageant by explaining the reasoning behind her objections to the pageant. Jolley and her supporters saw beauty pageants as representative of the larger issue of women's inferior position in society. Writing in the SFU student newspaper, *The Peak*, less than 10 days before the pageant, Jolley explained that beauty pageants submit to the conception that women are to define themselves based on their reproductive abilities and cosmetic appearance rather than their potential to think critically and take action.[34] Jolley asserted that beauty pageants enforce social structures in which women are asked to define themselves "by how close we come to the 'dazzling' plastic image of a cosmetic advertisement rather than realize our potential in conscious creative action."[35] Therefore, she argued, to change these social structures, women "must challenge these roles on all levels … [and organize] around their own needs to liberate themselves."[36] A key aspect of Jolley's proposed protest was her assurance to all that the protests were not directed toward the women competing in the pageant, but were instead targeting the institutions that sustained women's inferior status. In a letter to Canadian women's liberation groups, Jolley reassured women that she did not want to repeat the failures of past protests at beauty pageants where protesters opted to "attack the women who have been victimized by their socialization."[37] Jolley reassured contestants that she had no intention of attacking them as individuals, but instead desired to uncover the systems that objectify and dehumanize women.[38] Her reassurances and explanations to fellow contestants, pageant organizers, women's groups, and campus communities speak not only to the thoughtfulness of her actions, but to the responsibility she felt toward women and SFU students in speaking to the pageant not only as a protest candidate but as

31 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, letter from Pat Doyle, co-chairman, Queens Committee to Norm Wickstrom, President Student Society, SFU, November 25, 1969. As Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 253, notes, this disqualification, though attributed to both her student (not full-time) and marital (married) status, was likely more about using corporate sponsor money to fund a candidate whose aim was to bring negative attention to the pageant and its sponsors.

32 Young, "Miss Canadian University Chosen," p. 1; Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 253.

33 Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 253

34 Janiel Jolley, "Women, Beauty, and Liberation Today," *The Peak,* January 21, 1970, p. 4.

35 Jolley, "Women, Beauty, and Liberation Today," p. 4.

36 Jolley, "Women, Beauty, and Liberation Today," p. 4.

37 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Letter to Canadian women's liberation groups," January 17, 1970.

38 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Letter to pageant contestants," January 15, 1970.

the "legitimate candidate" from SFU. In the WLU auditorium on that January 30, 1970, evening, Jolley told those in attendance:

> I demand to speak here tonight as I represent a growing tendency in Canadian women to object to the dehumanizing nature of beauty contests and I demand to speak because I am the legitimate candidate of my student body who have raised a great deal of money to send me here to be heard…. We have been divided for centuries over such a superficiality as who is the prettiest. I appeal to you to join us in our protest. Let there be no losers in this auditorium tonight.[39]

Feminism and Campus Activism in Canada

Jolley's decision to actively protest the Miss Canadian University Pageant is not only about feminist responses to beauty pageants but a chapter in the story of student activism growing on Canadian postsecondary campuses in the late 1960s. Rising enrolment at universities in that decade created student bodies that desired to be active members of both their university community and the broader national community. Canadian students were inspired by domestic and international events, protesting and advocating for issues related to the Civil Rights Movement, the Quiet Revolution, the Vietnam War, and the Canadian nationalist movement.[40] Although these issues were being considered at many universities across Canada, not all participated at the same level. SFU and WLU, for instance, represent schools that were on opposite ends of the spectrum of student radicalism. Established in 1965, just five years prior to Jolley's protest, SFU already had a reputation for attracting student activists, as it was innovative and open and encouraged young people to be socially and politically involved.[41] Throughout the initial decade of its existence, SFU experienced several major student protests on its own campus and promoted several others, including sending Jolley to WLU as a protest candidate.[42]

Prominent among student activist groups at SFU was the SFU Women's Caucus, evidence of a local feminist consciousness that was being fostered among young women across the country. Although women had been organizing and protesting a variety of issues for decades, the late 1960s, Victoria Campbell-Windle argues, was a unique period of activism, distinct from that of previous generations as it was fostered within the context of the New Left and student movements.[43] Women in student organizations such as the Student Union for

39 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Janiel Jolley Shows 'Em the Way."

40 Roberta Lexier, "'The Backdrop Against Which Everything Happened': English-Canadian Student Movements and Off-Campus Movements for Change," *History of Intellectual Culture*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2007), p. 3.

41 Hugh Johnston, *Radical Campus: Making Simon Fraser University* (Vancouver: Douglas & McInytre, 2005), pp. 120, 136.

42 For further studies on activism at SFU, see Roberta Lexier, "The Canadian Student Movement in the Sixties: Three Case Studies" (PhD dissertation, University of Alberta, 2009); Ian Milligan, "Coming off the Mountain: Forging an Outward-Thinking New Left at Simon Fraser University," *BC Studies*, no. 171 (Autumn 2011), pp. 69-91; and Doug Owram, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 242-247.

43 Victoria Campbell-Windle, "We of the New Left: A Gender History of the Student Union for Peace Action from the Anti-Nuclear Movement to Women's Liberation," (PhD dissertation, University of Waterloo, 2017), p. 66.

Peace Action (SUPA) recognized that their positions were often subordinate to that of male students, as they were relegated to such tasks as cooking and typing.[44] In 1967, women organized to combat the "common dissatisfaction with the position of women in student organizations."[45] The publication of "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers…Listen…" by female members of SUPA encouraged women to consider the oppression they were subject to in their own lives and also attempted to transform gender roles within SUPA.[46] Women of SUPA explained that if they "refuse to be relegated to a womanly, wifely, emotional role and insist on being accepted as equally intelligent beings capable of theoretical, strategic, and analytical work, most men will eventually accept us."[47] Jolley echoed this manifesto in her assertion of women's subordinate place in society: "The ultimate 'career' for all women is that of wife and mother.… We are compelled to be economically dependent on men. We are trained for careers in which we are dependent on and subordinate to men."[48]

The women of SUPA's consciousness-raising efforts encouraged other female students to form their own organizations on campuses, as more women began to realize that, in organizations where men were in leadership positions, they would never be given equal opportunities.[49] For example, at SFU, women were consistently prevented from participating in leadership positions in student organizations; however, women used the knowledge and skills that they had acquired through what participation they were permitted to undertake in student movements to organize and rise against oppression by participating in their own women's organizations. In 1968, female students and faculty at SFU organized the Women's Caucus, which was an organization that was completely devoid of male involvement and focused entirely on the oppression of women. The Women's Caucus at SFU soon partnered with community members to create the Vancouver Women's Caucus (VWC).[50] The VWC wanted to "challenge the traditional myths about women and their place within the capitalist system and the university."[51] They focused much of their efforts on women's rights to control their own body by educating women on contraceptives and advocating for the full legalization of abortion. Janiel Jolley and her protest at WLU in 1970 emerge out of this context of activism and feminism on the radical campus of a young Simon Fraser University.

In comparison to SFU, WLU—renamed Wilfrid Laurier University in 1973, was founded in 1911 as the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary of Canada, which then established the Waterloo College of Arts in 1924 before relinquishing the

44 Roberta Lexier, "How Did the Canadian Women's Liberation Movement Emerge from the Sixties Student Movements? The Case of Simon Fraser University," *Women & Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2009), document 2, "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers…Listen…1967."

45 Lexier, "How Did the Canadian Women's Liberation Movement Emerge," introduction.

46 Lexier, "How Did the Canadian Women's Liberation Movement Emerge," document 2.

47 Judy Bernstein et al., "Sisters, Brothers, Lovers…Listen…" in *Up from the Kitchen, Up from the Bedroom, Up From Under, Women Unite! An Anthology of the Canadian Women's Movement* (Toronto: Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1972), p. 39.

48 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Janiel Jolley Day" poster, n.d.

49 Lexier, "How Did the Canadian Women's Liberation Movement Emerge," document 2.

50 Lexier, "How Did the Canadian Women's Liberation Movement Emerge," introduction.

51 Lexier, "How Did the Canadian Women's Liberation Movement Emerge," introduction.

college and becoming Waterloo Lutheran University in 1960—was a much more conservative campus, facing limited displays of student unrest. Steve Hewitt's study of Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) surveillance of university campuses also confirms WLU's limited student radicalism. In 1969 WLU did not have a single name on the RCMP's surveillance list, whereas a more radical campus such as the University of Toronto had over 13 pages of names.[52] Similarly, between 1971 and 1973, the RCMP did not have any records of subversive groups existing on the WLU campus. This is in contrast to the nearby University of Guelph, which was known to house six student groups considered to be a threat to national security.[53] While levels of student activism varied across universities, it is evident that the general atmosphere of unrest percolating throughout Canadian campuses provided an opportunity for Jolley and women's liberation movement groups to voice their discontent.

While the women's liberation movement was becoming prominent on the SFU campus, it was also gaining traction on other campuses across the country, as students gathered to discuss their experiences as women and act upon their common dissatisfactions.[54] Other women's liberation groups also recognized the problems of beauty pageants and saw them as an opportunity to protest the exploitation of women. Prior to the protest at the Miss Canadian University Pageant in 1970, groups in Toronto and Kingston agitated against pageants. In 1968, the Toronto women's liberation group protested the 'winter bikini' contest by condemning the pageant for marketing contestants' bodies.[55] The Kingston women's liberation group protested the Queen's University homecoming beauty pageant in 1969, where several women gathered to denounce the objectification of women.[56] The Kingston group was successful and "became a force to be reckoned with at Queen's University," as the homecoming pageant was cancelled the following year.[57] The University of Waterloo Federation of Students was also cognizant of the issues surrounding beauty pageants, as they passed a motion in 1969 that prohibited the Federation from sponsoring pageants on campus. The Federation President explained that, "such activities are perpetuating a situation where women are displayed for fun. It's not too far removed from buying slaves and selling them on the block."[58]

Despite the more conservative student culture, a nascent women's liberation group was finding a foothold on the campus of WLU. Women had first been admitted to Waterloo College of Arts in 1929, despite initial hesitations to accept

52 Steve Hewitt, *Spying 101: The RCMP's Secret Activities at Canadian Universities, 1917-1997* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), p. 140.
53 Hewitt, *Spying 101*, p. 180.
54 Nancy Adamson, "Feminists, Libbers, Lefties, and Radicals: The Emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement," in Joy Parr ed., *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 260.
55 Adamson, "Feminists, Libbers, Lefties, and Radicals," p. 262.
56 Adamson, "Feminists, Libbers, Lefties, and Radicals," p. 262; Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 248.
57 Adamson, "Feminists, Libbers, Lefties and Radicals," p. 263; Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 248.
58 "Council Defeats Male Chauvinism," *The Chevron,* November 28, 1969, p. 1.

them for fear that they would distract male students.[59] Although female students were not permitted to attend the seminary, the number of women enrolled in arts programs continued to grow, and by the late 1930s, 40% of the student population consisted of females, who were active in campus athletics and clubs.[60] By the late 1960s, the WLU administration was still navigating its role in students' lives, transitioning from the *in loco parentis* model of authority to treating students as grown adults. This can be seen in the women's residence rules at WLU, which until the 1970s, imposed strict regulations on female students' social activities.[61] Women's organizations on the WLU campus, however, remained scarce until November 1969, when, just two months prior to the 1970 Miss Canadian University Pageant, an editorial in *The Cord* raised the question of women's position in society to the WLU student body. WLU student Laurel Stuart recognized that women's liberation groups were growing across Canada and argued that "it is about time that the women on this campus did something about the situation."[62] The article concluded with a call for women to participate in a meeting to discuss women's liberation with the hopes that the meeting would serve as the beginning of a women's organization on the WLU campus.[63] By January 1970, just days before the pageant, a formal women's liberation organization had been formed at WLU with the goals of promoting the self-education of women, presenting women's issues to WLU students, and ending discrimination against women at WLU.[64] Although the level of feminist activity on the WLU campus was much lower than that at SFU, there is evidence of a growing feminist consciousness at WLU in the months and weeks leading up to the protest. There was an effort to make students aware of the serious issues that women faced, as well as a desire to inform them of the burgeoning women's liberation movement across the country.

Jolley's Reception

Jolley capitalized on this receptivity, spending the days leading up to the pageant in Waterloo meeting with newly formed women's liberation groups, as well as attending official pageant events as a protest candidate sponsored by SFU. The pageant administration attempted to uphold their decision to ban Jolley from events in the initial days of the Winter Carnival, as organizer Peter Sharpe explained, "If Jeniel [*sic*] comes to the private princess functions we will just explain to her that they are for invited guests only."[65] Jolley stood by her assertion that she would participate in pageant events, proclaiming that, "if necessary I will attend all of the functions to present the alternative. I'll be there to say, 'Yes, I do

59 Andrew M. Thomson, *Leadership and Purpose: A History of Wilfrid Laurier University* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University & Andrew M. Thomson, 2011), p. 39.
60 Thomson, *Leadership and Purpose*, p. 44.
61 WLU, Gail Murray Fonds RG-102.8, file 1.1, "WLU Women's Residence regulations in 1967," 1967 [2011].
62 Laurel Stuart, "Antidote," *The Cord Weekly*, November 21, 1969, p. 5.
63 Stuart, "Antidote," p. 5.
64 Laurel Stuart, "Women's Liberation at WLU," *The Cord Weekly*, January 23, 1970, p. 3.
65 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, Kim Richards, "Ousted Entrant's Aides Protest as 34 Beauty Contestants Dine."

exist. Please acknowledge me.'"[66] Jolley's persistence was successful, as Sharpe changed his position before the pageant, allowing Jolley to have two minutes to speak at all pageant events.[67] While in Ontario, Jolley attended women's liberation meetings at the University of Waterloo and the University of Guelph to explain her position and encourage people to join her in the protest. Students from McMaster University, York University, and the University of Toronto also travelled to WLU for the protest. With the growing threat of protests against the pageant, the WLU Executive Committee of the President's Council required all protests on campus be booked through the WLU administration, and all protestors who were not students at WLU were required to sign a form that would formally recognize them as a protestor.[68] Organizers of the protest saw these measures as attempts to intimidate protestors; however, this did not stop the women from registering the protest and all of those involved in picketing.[69]

On the night of the pageant, over 200 men and women from universities across Ontario travelled to WLU to participate in the protest.[70] While several protestors picketed the entrance to the auditorium, 50 others were seated inside to support Jolley during her speech to the audience.[71] After all of the candidates had been introduced, Jolley walked to the stage and spoke to the candidates and audience on the dehumanizing nature of beauty contests, while urging the candidates to join her in the protest.[72] It was at this time that Judy Darcy, a finalist from York University, withdrew from the contest and joined Jolley in the protest, having decided beforehand that she would support Jolley.[73] While Jolley had hoped that more contestants would join her in her protest, she knew that she was spreading her message as she delivered her speech among "cheers from many women in the audience" and received congratulations from WLU Director of Education Colin McKay, who said he supported the protestors' position.[74] Although the pageant carried on and a winner was crowned, protestors and Jolley asserted that, "the women's liberation movement was obviously the winner of this pageant."[75]

The protests of the pageant were subject to media coverage by newspapers across the country, and, while opinions on the success and motives of the protest varied, the protest did indeed triumph in initiating a conversation about women's liberation. SFU student newspaper *The Peak* was clearly proud of the work that Jolley and the Women's Caucus had put into the protest, as the following week's headline proclaimed, "Janiel Jolley Shows 'Em the Way."[76] Similarly, Jolley herself reported on the protest in *The Vancouver Sun* under the headline "SFU

66 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Ousted Entrant's Aides Protest."
67 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Janiel Jolley Shows' Em the Way."
68 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Book a picket," January 30, 1970.
69 Members of the WL Movement, "Picketers at WLU," *The Cord Weekly,* February 6, 1970, p. 3.
70 Members of the WL Movement, "Picketers at WLU," p. 3.
71 Young, "Miss Canadian University Queen Chosen," p. 1.
72 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Janiel Jolley Shows' Em the Way," p. 1.
73 Young, "Miss Canadian University Queen Chosen," p. 1.
74 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, Jolley, "SFU Protester 'Overcomes.'"
75 Members of the WL Movement, "Picketers at WLU," p. 3.
76 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, "Janiel Jolley Shows 'Em the Way," p. 1.

Protestor 'Overcomes' University Beauty Contest."[77] WLU's *The Cord* presented a fairly neutral front-page recollection of events by including details of the pageant as well as the protests that occurred, calling the protest an "unfortunate aspect of this year's pageant."[78] *The Cord* also published an article by members of the women's liberation group that explained the success of the protest, the reasoning behind Jolley's objections, and discussed the meeting the protestors had after the pageant where they considered the triumph of the protest and contemplated the role of men in the women's liberation movement.[79] However, *The Cord* also included editorials that detailed how the protestors "perpetuated the same kind of intolerance they were against,"[80] illustrating the "ideological dilemmas that emerged … when beauty contest organizers and contestants argued that pageants were not antifeminist, while feminists fervently argued the opposite."[81] The *McGill Daily* and the University of Waterloo's *The Chevron* both reported on the pageant and protest, further spreading the words and beliefs of Jolley and her fellow protestors.[82]

Conclusion

Reporting on the Winter Carnival and Miss Canadian University Pageant, a WLU alumni publication subtly commented on the protests by proclaiming that the 1970 winner "looked in no special need of liberation."[83] On the surface, the comment underlines the fact that the women's liberation movement was still very much contested on Canadian campuses, that the line of protest between the 1968 Miss America Pagent and the 1976 Miss Canada Pagaent was neither inevitable nor without resistance. Read against the grain though, it speaks to the fact that WLU was already experiencing a feminist awakening like the one at SFU. Given more time, Jolley's protest, her act of liberation, may indeed have proven unnecessary given this awakening. Only by attending to local contexts, to the growth of activism and feminism on the campuses of SFU and WLU can we properly historicize Jolley's protest and see that liberation, at least in terms of the Miss Canadian University Pageant, was likely with or without Jolley.

The conversations surrounding women's liberation that were initiated prior to Jolley's protest and catalyzed by it continued to percolate on the WLU campus in the following months. In the immediate aftermath of the protest, the WLU women's liberation group claimed that the events "made

77 SFUA, WMC, scrapbook 2, Jolley, "SFU Protester 'Overcomes.'"
78 Young, "Miss Canadian University Queen Chosen," p. 1.
79 Members of the WL Movement, "Picketers at WLU," p. 3.
80 "Carnival," *The Cord Weekly,* February 6, 1970, p. 5.
81 Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," p. 228.
82 "SFU Queen Queers Pageant," p. 9; "Candidate Fights for Female Equality," *The Chevron*, January 30, 1970, p. 1.
83 "Winter Carnival Grows Bigger … and Bigger," *Waterloo Campus*, March 1970.

Women's Liberation a fact on this campus."[84] In March 1970, a female student ran in the student election to become the arts representative for the Student Advisory Committee. Her platform included recognizing women's liberation on the campus, and although she did not win, her candidacy itself displays the growing voice of women's liberation on the WLU campus.[85] At the beginning of the following school year, in September 1970, the women's liberation group on campus maintained itself by partnering with Kitchener-Waterloo and the University of Waterloo groups to hold joint events.[86] By January 1971, almost a year after the protests, the WLU women's liberation group reported that "only" 18 people had attended the first meeting of the year; however, organizers encouraged women to continue to attend meetings even if they only supported one aspect of their platform.[87]

The clearest impact of the 1970 protests was the discontinuation of the Miss Canadian University Pageant. The pageant was officially cancelled after the 1970 pageant and protest because other universities and corporate sponsors abandoned financial support for the event.[88] While *The Cord* did not explicitly link the cancellation of the pageant to the 1970 protest, they speculated on the connection between the two and called for the university to also cancel the Miss Waterloo Lutheran contest:

> Year after year these orgies of mediocrity take place in an atmosphere reminiscent of the sacrificial offering ceremonies of the pagans,… at a time when de-humanization is the most serious of all our ills, The Cord urges [the cancellation of] the Miss Waterloo Lutheran University event entirely.[89]

Years later, the protest still occupied the memories of WLU students, as evidenced in a 1974 reminiscence in *The Cord* on "the good old days when things really happened on the WLU campus during carnival week (does anyone remember the Miss Canadian University Pageant and the resultant war with women's lib?)."[90] Jolley's protest at the 1970 pageant is not just evidence of activism on Canadian university campuses nor is it one plot point in telling that history, but in the case of WLU it is a real flashpoint, entangled very closely with the rise of feminist consciousness on campus—evident in the founding of the WLU women's liberation group, the cancellation of the pageant, the emergence of an explicitly feminist student body candidate, a call in the student paper for the end of the Miss WLU contest, and the later demise of residence rules governing female students' social activities, a holdover of WLU's Lutheran roots.

The protest of the Miss Canadian University pageant is just one of numerous events initiated by university groups and community organizations throughout

84 "Picketers at WLU," *The Cord Weekly*, February 6, 1970, p. 3.
85 "Election Tuesday – Pick Two," *The Cord Weekly,* March 6, 1970, p. 1.
86 "Women's Lib," *The Cord Weekly*, September 25, 1970, p. 7.
87 "Women's Lib," *The Cord Weekly*, January 29, 1971, p. 4.
88 "Useless Expense," *The Cord Weekly*, October 9, 1970, p. 4.
89 "Useless Expense," p. 4; Gentile, "Queen of the Maple Leaf," pp. 252, 254.
90 Patricia Bush, "Winter Carnival Programme Set," *The Cord*, January 17, 1974, p. 9.

the 1960s and 1970s that fought for women's equality and attempted to free them from the subjugation of intense beauty and domestic expectations. The VWC continued their work throughout the next several years by focusing on such issues as abortion, childcare, and women's employment. Women's organizations in Ontario focused their efforts on similar issues, while also attempting to deal with internal conflicts amongst their membership. Organizers across Canada were faced with trying to overcome the varying political and strategic views of women in attempts to sustain the movement long-term.[91] The effort to unite women at WLU during the 1970 Miss Canadian University pageant was clearly a success as a group of women united to defeat what was claimed to be the biggest student pageant in Canada and the feature event of the WLU Winter Carnival. Jolley and her fellow protestors successfully revealed the unrest among women regarding their place in society, legitimizing female students' ability to mobilize, challenge authority, and create change.

91 Adamson, "Feminists, Libbers, Lefties, and Radicals," p. 274.